

41  
A  
SERMON

Preach'd at the Opening

OF THE

*Coll. Run*

SYNOD

OF

*Lothian and Tweeddale,*

NOVEMBER 1st, 1726.

---

By Mr. ARCHIBALD LUNDIE Minister,  
of the Gospel at SALTOUN.

---

*Published at the Desire of those who heard it.*

---



---

EDINBURGH:

Printed by ROBERT FLEMING and COMPANY,  
and sold at Mr. JAMES DAVIDSON'S Shop, 1727.

# SERMON

Preach'd at the Opening

OF THE

# SYNOD

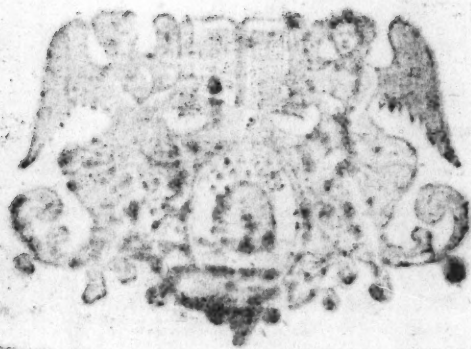
OF

# Lotbians and Tweeddale.

NOVEMBER 18. 1726.

By M<sup>r</sup>. ARCHIBALD BURNIE Minister  
of the Gospel at SALTBURN.

Published at the Desire of those who heard it.



EDINBURGH:  
Printed by ROBERT FLEMING and COMPANY,  
and sold at Mr. James Davidson's Shop, 1727.





A  
**SERMON, &c.**

M A T T H. V. 13.

*Ye are the Salt of the Earth ; but if the Salt have  
lost his Savour, wherewith shall it be salted ?  
It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast  
out, and to be troden under Foot of Men.*



HEY who have any just Sense  
of the *Christian Religion*, must  
needs own it to be the most  
excellent, and the most worthy  
of God, both in its Nature  
and Tendency. Its Doctrine  
is so pure and peaceable, its  
Precepts are so heavenly and  
divine, the Patterns it sets be-  
fore us are so noble, the Mo-  
tives it proposes to us, and the Encouragements it offers  
us are so powerful, that there can be nothing more cer-  
tain than that it came from Heaven, and is designed to  
lead us thither. It may therefore be justly expected, that  
they

they who profess a Religion so holy and excellent, should lead holy and excellent Lives. And indeed, when the Professors, but especially the Preachers of Christianity are careful to live up to their Profession and Character, as they take the most effectual Way to adorn the Doctrine of their God and Saviour, and to secure the present Peace and future Happiness of their own Souls, so they become publick Blessings to the World, and happy Instruments of saving the Souls of others. Whereas, on the contrary, when the Professors, but especially the Ministers of this excellent Religion, have lost the true Spirit of their Character, and do openly contradict their Sacred Profession, by their Life and Practice; as they do what in them lies to affront the Religion of the Holy Jesus, and to ruin the Souls of others, so they deservedly expose themselves to the utmost Contempt both from God and Men, and they must at last receive the most dreadful Doom. This is what our Saviour plainly tells his Disciples in the awful Text I have just now read. *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, &c.*

These Words are a Part of our Lord's Divine Sermon on the Mount, which contains a Summary of the Self-denying Doctrine of the Gospel, and a short Directory for a Christian Life. In the Verses going before my Text, we have the Characters of those whom our Lord pronounces truly Blessed. And in these we may plainly see how far the Men of the World are mistaken in the Notions they have of true Happiness. They reckon none happy, but such as abound in Wealth, and spend their Days in worldly Mirth and Pleasure. They bless the Covetous, and account it a noble Thing to resent Injuries, and avenge themselves on those they take to be their Enemies. They shrink at the very Thought of the Cross, and can by no means endure to suffer any thing that is uneasy to Flesh and Blood. But our Saviour gives us quite other Measures of true Happiness. He blesses *the Poor in Spirit, and those that mourn, the meek, and those that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, the*

mer-

*merciful and pure in Heart, the Peace-makers, and such as are persecuted for Righteousness Sake, inviting them to rejoice and be exceeding glad in the Prospect of that great Reward that is prepared for them in Heaven. These are the Maxims which our Blessed Lord instills into the Minds of his Disciples. It is upon this Model that he forms the first Preachers of his Gospel. This is the Salt wherewith he seasons them, in order to their being fitted and prepared to season others; and in the Text he gives them an awful Caution to beware of losing the Savour of it. Ye are the Salt of the Earth (says he) but if the Salt hath lost its Savour, &c.*

WE may understand these Words as spoke to the Disciples of Christ in general, that is, to all the Professors of Christianity. For indeed every one that *nameth the Name of Jesus*, ought by a savoury Conversation, and an exemplary Holiness of Life, to be as *the Salt of the Earth*, to season a corrupt World, and to check the Impiety of the Profane. And it is a lamentable Thing when this *Salt loses its Savour*, when the Professors of Christianity abandon the Spirit and the Practice of it, when they retain only the Form, but deny the Power of Godliness. Such false Christians shall be disowned by our Lord, and rejected with Disdain. He will say to them in the great Day, *I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity (a)*. For *unsavoury Salt is good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be troden under Foot of Men*. It concerns all of us to lay this seriously to Heart ere it be too late.

BUT though these Words may be very fitly applied to all Christians, yet no Doubt they are more peculiarly applicable to the *Ministers* of the Gospel, who are the Teachers and Guides of others. And in this View I am now to consider them, as being addressed by our Blessed Saviour in a more particular Manner to his Apostles, and in them to all their Successors in the holy

(a) Matth. 7. 23.



holy Ministry, even to the End of the World. Ye (says he) *are the Salt of the Earth, &c.*

IN which Words there are three Things that naturally offer themselves to our Consideration. 1. The Character of good and faithful Pastors. They are *the Salt of the Earth*. 2. The opposite Character of unworthy and unfaithful Ministers. They are as *Salt that has lost its Savour*. 3. Their dreadful Doom. *If the Salt have lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, &c.*

THESE are weighty and important Subjects; and I do most willingly own, that it were more proper for me to sit down at the Feet of others, and learn my Duty from them, than in this Manner to discourse to such an Audience. But since, my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, ye have laid this Work upon me, ye will suffer me to be your Remembrancer in these Things, which it so highly concerns all who are clothed with this sacred Character, to lay deeply to Heart. And may our great Lord and Master enable us to understand his own Words, and so to ponder them in our Hearts, that we may faithfully improve them to all their just and proper Consequences in the Conduct of our Lives.

THE first Thing we are here to consider is the Character of good and faithful Pastors. They are *the Salt of the Earth*. This is a metaphorical Expression, and it very fitly serves to represent to us the Disposition and the Conduct of true and faithful Ministers. For Salt, you know, is commonly made use of to season such Things as are unfavoury, and to give them an agreeable Relish. It is likewise used to preserve such Things as are apt to corrupt and putrify, being an Antedote against Putrification. Now in both these Respects good and faithful Pastors are *the Salt of the Earth*. They are useful Instruments in the Hand of God to season an unfavoury World, and to preserve it from all Impurity and Corruption.



I. TRUE and faithful Pastors are *the Salt of the Earth*, to season an unsavoury World. They are seasoned themselves, as Salt which retains its Savour, and then, by the Blessing of God, they season others. Their Minds are seasoned with the true Knowledge of Divine Things, and their Hearts are seasoned with the Grace and Spirit of Jesus Christ. Their Minds, I say, are seasoned with the true Knowledge of Divine Things. For *they have indeed learned Christ, having heard him, and been taught by him as the Truth is in Jesus (b).* Their Knowledge is not merely speculative and notional, a Knowledge that swims in the Head, but sinks not to the Heart, and has no Influence to reform the Life. This Knowledge is of dangerous Consequence. It *puffeth up*, (c) and swells a Man with Pride and Self-conceit. It inspires him with a haughty Contempt of others, and makes him stiff and stubborn, so that being wedded to his own Opinion, he stops his Ear to wiser Counsels. The Knowledge wherewith true and faithful Ministers are seasoned is of another Kind. It is a real, solid, fruitful, practical Knowledge of Divine Things; a Knowledge that humbles and purifies the Heart, and effectually reforms the Life. They are *taught of God*, and endued with that *Wisdom from above*, which is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy (d).* God who commandeth the Light to shine out of Darkness, bath shined in their Hearts to give them the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ (e). Now in Consequence of this, they have a deep Sense of the Truths of the Gospel, they taste, they feed upon them, they convert them into solid Nourishment, they feel the Power and Efficacy of them; they are implanted in their Hearts, and take deep Root there, so that they yield their Fruit in their Lives. This is the Knowledge wherewith true  
Pastors

(b) Eph. 4. 20, 21. (c) 1 Cor. 8. 1. (d) 1 Jam. 3. 17. (e) 2 Cor. 4. 6.

Pastors have their Minds seasoned, in order to their being fitted to teach and guide others.

THEIR Hearts also are seasoned with the Grace and Spirit of Jesus Christ. Being united to him by a true and living Faith, out of his Fulness they all receive and Grace for Grace (f). They abide in him, and he in them, and thereby they are enabled to bear much Fruit (g). Their Souls are his living Temples where he dwells, and which he adorns with all the Graces and Gifts, and Fruits of his Holy Spirit. They are crucified with Christ, nevertheless they live, yet not they, but Christ liveth in them, and the Life which they live in the Flesh, they live by the Faith of the Son of God (h). Their Hearts are disengaged from all inferior Things, and raised to the Things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the Right-hand of God. They are crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to them (i). They are dead to all the Appetites of Flesh and Blood, having crucified the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts (k). They have learned of their Blessed Master, to be meek and lowly in Heart, to deny themselves, to renounce their corrupt Self-love and Self-will, and to take up their Cross. Their Hearts burn with the purest Love of God; they love him for himself, and they love nothing else, but in him and for his Sake. They are enflamed with an ardent Charity to one another, and to all Men, which disposes them to wish well, and to do Good to all as they have Opportunity and Ability, but their Charity in a special Manner exerts itself in doing what they can to promote the Salvation of Souls, these precious Souls which their Great Master valued at the Rate of his own Blood. In a Word, their Hearts are cast into the Mould (l) of the Gospel, and receive the Impression of it as Wax from the Seal. They have Christ formed in them, so that the same Mind is in them which was also in him. They are his living Images, and in their Life

(f) John 1. 16. (g) John 15. 5. (h) Gal. 2. 20. (i) Gal. 6. 14. (k) Gal. 5. 24. (l) Rom. 6. 17. Marg.

Life and Conduct they shew forth his Virtues, and trace his Steps.

NOW being thus seasoned themselves, as the *Salt of the Earth*, they season others, and that both by the Purity of their Doctrine, and the Holiness of their Life. They season an unfavourable World by the Purity of their Doctrine, instilling into the Minds of their People, the Divine Truths and Maxims of the Gospel, not as they are corrupted and adulterated by the false and perverse Glosses of Men, but in their native Purity and Simplicity. *For they are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: But as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the Sight of God, speak they in Christ (m).* What they received of the Lord themselves, what they have learned from his Gospel, that declare they unto others. They speak not the idle Dreams and Fancies of their own Brain, or the Dictates of their Pride and Passion, but the Word of Truth delivered to them by their Great Master. As it becomes his faithful Ambassadors, they keep close to their Commission and Instructions, teaching Men *to observe all Things whatsoever he hath commanded them (n).* They do not accommodate their Doctrine to the Lusts and Humours of Men, nor do they flatter and sooth, and *daub with untempered Morter, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace, and sewing Pillows to all Arm-holes (o)*; No, they faithfully deliver their Master's Message, and deal sincerely with the Souls committed to their Charge, as knowing they must give an Account.

THEY season others also by the Holiness of their Life. It is their constant Care to practise what they preach, that they may approve themselves *burning and shining Lights (p)*. They *cast out the Beam out of their own Eye, that they may see the better to cast out the Mote out of their Brother's Eye (q)*. As true Shepherds they go *before the Sheep (r)*. They not only point out, but lead

B

the

(m) 2 Cor. 2. 17. (n) Matth. 28. 20. (o) Ezek. 13. 15, 26, 18. (p) John 5. 35. (q) Matth. 7. 5. (r) John 10. 4.



the Way to their People. They *take heed to themselves* (f), as well as to their *Doctrine*, and continue in such a Course with a steady Perseverance, *in all Things showing themselves Patterns of good Works* (t), that they may be an *Example of the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity* (u). And thus they season an unsavoury World by their holy Lives, as well as by their edifying Doctrine.

BUT, 2dly, As Salt is used not only to season what is insipid, but also to preserve such Things as are apt to corrupt and putrify; so all faithful *Ministers* do their utmost Endeavour to preserve their People pure, and to keep them from every Thing that may corrupt either their Minds or Manners.

THEY are careful to give them necessary and seasonable Antidotes against the Errors they may be in Danger of falling into, that they may be kept *sound in the Faith*. In a special Manner, they guard them against the grosser and more dangerous Errors that sap the Foundations of Religion, or that have a pernicious Influence on Practice, as contributing to slacken our Obligations to a holy Life, or to give false Views of Christianity, and make the Way to Heaven broader and easier than our Saviour hath made it. They are no less careful to preserve their People from all Corruption of *Manners*, especially from the Sins that abound in the Times and Places wherein they live, not only the grosser and more scandalous Sins, which leave a Stain and Blot upon their Character in the World, but the more refined and spiritual Sins also, which, though they have not so bad a Name among Men, yet are as heinous in the Sight of God, if not more, such as Pride, Malice, Hypocrisy, Envy, Anger, and Revenge. These are infernal and diabolical Vices, that bear the Stamp and Impress of the Devil, and are most directly opposite to the Nature and Perfections of God, and to that Divine Charity, which

(f) 1 Tim. 4. 16. (t) Tit. 2. 7. (u) 1 Tim. 4. 12.

which is the Life and Soul of all true Religion. Therefore all good and faithful Pastors are in a special Manner careful to preserve their People from these Sins. They are as much afraid of their making an Apostacy and Defection from the Spirit and Practice of Christianity, as from the Belief and Profession of it; and therefore they do their utmost to guard them against the one, as well as the other.

THIS is the great Scope and Aim both of their Lives and Labours. Their strict and severe Lives are a standing Reproof and Check to the Wickedness and Defection of others. Their most painful Labours in the Work of the Ministry are bestowed in promoting the same Design. For this End, they zealously declaim and thunder, not only against open and notorious Vice, but also against that soft and delicate, that sensual and Flesh-pleasing Course of Life, which is now so common among the Professors of Christianity, and yet so contrary to the known Maxims of the Gospel, and the Example of our crucified Redeemer. They sharply reprove the Sins of their People, both in publick and private. They lay open the Baseness and Hatredness of a worldly and wicked Life, and are often representing, in the most lively Manner they can, what a miserable End it will come to at last. They boldly denounce the Judgments of God against wilful and impenitent Sinners, assuring them, upon the Word of our Saviour himself, That *except they repent, they must certainly perish* (x). As to open and scandalous Offenders, these they subject to that wholesome *Discipline*, which Christ hath established in his Church, and when they prove obstinate, and give no Evidences of Repentance, then, with great Regrete, and in the Spirit of Charity, they proceed to Ecclesiastical Censures, that the offending Party, if possible, may be awakened, and that others also may fear.

THUS I have shown you in what Respects good and faithful Pastors are the *Salt of the Earth*. Let us now

(x) Luke 13. 3, 5.

see what Improvement we are to make of this Matter.

AND, 1. It may enable us to form a just Notion of the Dignity and Excellency of the Pastoral Office. Ministers of the Gospel are employed in the noblest Service that Men are capable of. They serve the highest Lord, and that in the most honourable Capacity. They are *Ambassadors for Christ* to beseech Men in God's Name, and to pray them *in Christ's Stead* to be *reconciled to God* (y), and to return to their Obedience and Allegiance to him. They are sent on the most important Errand, to promote the Reformation of Mankind, and the Salvation of immortal Souls, to spread the Savour of Christ's Name among Men, and to season their Minds and Manners with the pure and undefiled Religion he hath taught. All other Designs are mean and despicable in Comparison of this, and do serve but low and poor Ends. To minister to the Souls of Men is a Work that the glorious Angels reckon it their Honour to be employed in. *Are they not all ministering Spirits* (saith the Apostle) *sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation* (z)? Yea this was the Work and Business of the blessed Son of God himself when he appeared in our mortal Nature. He went about from Place to Place, *preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom* (a.) He is the *great Shepherd of the Sheep* (b), who came to seek and to save that which was lost (c). Alas, that this honourable Office of the holy Ministry should be so much despised and set at nought, as it is now by a great many, who look on it as a Business only proper for Men of an inferiour Genius, or of a lower Rank. The temporal Profits, it seems, are the only Measure by which they value this sacred Function. And indeed they who have no purer Aims, no higher Views than these, are altogether unworthy of it.

2. FROM this Character of faithful Pastors, we may justly

(y) 2 Cor. 5. 20. (z) Heb. 1. 14. (a) Matth. 4. 23. (b) Heb. 13. 20. (c) Luke 19. 10.



justly infer the Necessity of their Office. They are *the Salt of the Earth*. Now Salt is not more necessary to season what is unfavoury, and to preserve what is apt to corrupt and putrify, than a faithful Ministry is to season and reform a naughty World, and to keep it from relapsing into a corrupt State. They who consider the gross Ignorance, the great Blindness and Stupidity of Mankind, cannot but be sensible of the Need they have to be taught and instructed in the important Truths and Duties of Religion, and to have these great Things continually set before them, and inculcated upon them. And if we reflect on the horrid Corruption of the humane Nature, in this our lapsed State, if we consider that Men are now so deeply sunk into Flesh and Sense, so enslaved to Self-love and the Love of the World, so immersed into secular Affairs and distracting Business, we cannot but see how necessary it is that they be often roused up and awakened out of their spiritual Slumbers, and excited by the most powerful Motives to consider the Things which belong to their everlasting Peace, to mind their precious Souls and the weighty Concerns of another World, to ply their Duty with a faithful Diligence, and to persevere therein with a firm and steady Resolution to the End. Now for these Purposes our Lord hath established the *pastoral Office* in his Church, and appointed it to be continued and perpetuated *even to the End of the World* (a).

3. THE Character of faithful Pastors in my Text, may likewise discover to us the great Usefulness and Advantage of the ministerial Office. True and faithful Pastors are eminent Blessings to the World; As the *Salt of the Earth*, they season the Minds and Hearts of Men with solid Wisdom and true Piety. They are Instruments in God's Hand to promote the greatest Good and the truest Interests of Mankind, to rescue them from their Errors and Follies, and to lead them into the Way of Truth and Peace: They are *the Savour of Life unto Life to them that are saved* (b). By their painful Labours and exemplary

(a) Matth. 28. 19, 20. (b) 2 Cor. 2. 16.

amplary Lives, they contribute to bring back wandering Sinners to God, to take them off from the vain and fruitless Pursuit of the empty Husks of this World, the transitory Things of Time, that they may breathe and pant after God the only true Good, and the Things that are eternal; to deliver them from the Slavery of base Lusts and unruly Passions, from the Dominion of Sin, and the Tyranny of Satan, that they may be Partakers of the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Their great Care and constant Business is to make Men wise and good, that is, to make them truly happy, both here and hereafter. This is the Design of the pastoral Office, and all true Pastors do faithfully pursue it. Happy they who are under the Conduct of such spiritual Guides. Let us *pray* the great Lord of the Harvest, that he may send forth many such Labourers into his Harvest (a).

4. FROM what hath been said of this Character of good and faithful Pastors, we may plainly perceive, that the right Discharge of the pastoral Office is no easy Matter. The Work that Ministers are called to as the *Salt of the Earth*, is in all the Parts of it most painful and difficult. It will require the most unwearied Labour and Diligence; the most undaunted Courage, the greatest Prudence, and the firmest Patience. Well may we cry out with the Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these Things* (b)? The Charge of Souls is a Burden too heavy for the Shoulders of an Angel; and what are we, poor Worms of the Earth, that we should bear up under it? Indeed we can never do so by any Strength and Sufficiency of our own; but our Comfort is this, that *our Sufficiency is of God*, who can make us *able Ministers of the New Testament* (c). And to him we are to look, on him we are to depend for his continual Aid. But if our Work is hard in itself, the Opposition and Discouragement we must needs expect to meet with, if we are faithful, will make it yet more difficult. If we are indeed

(a) Matth. 9. 38. (b) 2 Cor. 2. 16. (c) 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6.

indeed the *Salt of the Earth*, the Men of the World will fret and spurn against us, for Salt is smarting to a Sore. While we check their Vices, and lay a Restraint upon their irregular Appetites, they will storm and give us all the Uneasiness they can. In a Word, if we act our Part faithfully, we shall have all the Wit and Malice of bad Men, and all the Power and Rage of Devils combin'd against us. But, my Brethren, we serve a good Master, who sends none a *Warfare at their own Charges*. They who have his Call and Commission, and who *have obtained Mercy of him to be faithful*, shall not want his powerful Supports. *He holds the Stars in his Right-hand.* (a) If we cleave to him, *everlasting Arms shall be underneath us* (b): *His Grace shall be sufficient for us, and his Strength shall be made perfect in our Weakness.* (c)

BUT I proceed to a 5th Inference from this Character of good and faithful Pastors. If they are the *Salt of the Earth*, then it concerns us who are of the holy Ministry to endeavour with our utmost Care to answer this Character. Now we can never be the *Salt of the Earth* to season others, if we are not first seasoned our selves. Let us therefore endeavour to have our Minds seasoned with true and saving Knowledge of Divine Things, whereby we may have a lively Sense of them, and be transformed into them; that *we all with open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord* (d). How can we pretend to teach others, if we are not *taught of God* our selves? We must first learn in the School of Christ; e're we can communicate the true Knowledge of him to other Men. With what Confidence can we undertake to be Guides to others, if we our selves are spiritually blind? *If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the Ditch*; (e) but the blind Guide must fall undermost, and sink the deepest into the Mire

(a) Rev. 1. 16. (b) Deut. 33. 27. (c) 2 Cor. 12. 9. (d) 2 Cor. 3. 18. (e) Matth. 15. 14.



**Mire.** It concerns us then to have our own Eyes opened, and our Minds enlightened with the Wisdom which is from above.

Now, in order to this, it will be necessary for us to give a close and diligent Application to the Study of the Holy Scriptures, which are the Treasure and Store-house of Divine Knowledge, being given by *Inspiration of God*, and therefore *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* (a) We ought frequently and deeply to meditate on the sacred Truths contained in this Divine Book, and to *give our selves wholly to them, that the Word of Christ may dwell in us richly in all Wisdom* (b.) All our Studies must be directed to this as their great End and Scope, that we may be the better enabled to understand and improve the Holy Scriptures. Whatever Studies have no Reference to this, and are no Way serviceable towards it, are to be considered by us as mere Amusements and Diversions from our proper Work and Business. We are carefully to use the best Helps for attaining to a just and deep Sense of the important Truths contain'd in these sacred Records; but still we are to remember that the most effectual Way to penetrate into their true Meaning, and to have a savoury Relish of the Divine Truths they contain, is to read and ponder them with a profound Humility and a child-like Simplicity, with great Purity of Heart, and a deep Self-denial, having our Minds recollected, and our Affections disengaged from all worldly Things, being firmly resolved to do the Will of God when we know it, imploring the Divine Aid by fervent Prayer, and begging that the Father of Lights may be graciously pleased to enlighten our dark Minds, *to open our Understandings that we may understand the Scriptures, and to open our Eyes that we may behold wondrous Things out of his Law* (c). This, this, my Brethren, is the true Key to open these rich Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge

(a) 2 Tim. 3. 17. 18. (b) Col. 3. 16. (c) Psal. 119. 18.

ledge, these *Mysteries of the Kingdom of God that are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto Babes* (m).

BUT that we may indeed be the *Salt of the Earth*, let us also endeavour to have our *Hearts* seasoned with *Divine Grace*, that we may be animated with the *Life and Spirit of Jesus Christ*, and that the *Virtues* which did so eminently shine forth in the Chief *Shepherd*, may in some good Measure and Degree appear in us also; that so the *Savour of his Name, which is as Ointment poured forth*, (n) may be upon us. How can we recommend the Power of Godliness to others, if we have Nothing but the Form of it our selves? Will we ever *travel in Birth to have Christ formed* (o) in the Souls of our People, if he is not formed in our own Souls? We must needs talk in a cold and lifeless Manner, about such Things as we have no Experience of, and it cannot but damp our Confidence in pressing the Life of Religion on others, when our own Consciences are inwardly reproaching us with the Want of it. Sure then it concerns us, who by our Office are obliged to exhort other Men to Purity of Heart and Life, to be pure and holy our selves. For *unto the Wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant into thy Mouth* (p)? None are fit to be trusted with the Care and Conduct of Christ's Sheep, but such as are enflamed with his Love. *Simon Son of Jonas lovest thou me* (q), says our Saviour three several Times to the Apostle *Peter*, and upon his giving a sincere Testimony of this Love, he receives the weighty Charge, *Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep*. Let us therefore breathe and pant after the Spirit of true Piety and Devotion, the Spirit of Humility, Self-denial and Charity, the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us beg of him by fervent and constant Prayer, that he may send his Spirit into our Hearts, whereby we may be thoroughly renewed into his Image and Likeness, that being made new Crea-

C

tures,

(m) Matth. 11. 25. (n) Cant. 1. 3. (o) Gal. 4. 19. (p) Psal. 50. 16. (q) John 21. 15.—

tures, *old Things may pass away, and all Things in us may become new.*

AND being thus seasoned our selves, let us take Care to season others both by our Doctrine and Example. Let our Sermons be so managed, that it may appear we have no other View, but to gain Souls to Jesus Christ, to convert poor wandering Sinners from the Error of their Way, and bring them back to the *Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls*. Let us beware of seeking our selves, or making a vain Ostentation of our Learning or Eloquence. *We preach not our selves* (says the Apostle) *but Jesus Christ the Lord* (r). This is the Errand on which we are sent, this is the End we are to propose to our selves, and our Sermons must be so ordered, both as to the Matter and Manner, as may most effectually contribute to reach it.

As to the Matter of our publick Discourses, it must always be what is savoury and edifying. We must not chuse such Subjects as may be most easy to our selves, but such as are most useful to our People. Nor are we to entertain them with such Doctrines, as may perhaps please them best, but with what may profit them most. We must not adapt our Sermons to the false Taste of many of our Hearers, but we are to feed them with the most solid and wholesome Food. We must beware of filling their Heads with airy Notions, or with dry and useless Speculations, however curious and entertaining they may seem to be, for this were to feed them with empty Husks. Nor are we to insist upon hard and knotty Questions, that exercise and vex the most subtile Wits of the Learned, for this were to give them Stones instead of Bread. But above all, we must beware of giving them such Views of the Christian Religion, as may in any wise encourage them to entertain the Hopes of Heaven and Eternal Happiness hereafter, though they are at no great Pains to lead a holy Life here ; for this were



were to give them rank Poison, instead of safe and solid Nourishment.

IF we are the *Salt of the Earth*, we will take Care to season their Minds with the *substantial Truths* of the Gospel, and we will insist most on such as are of greatest Importance, the main and fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith, and the *weightier Matters of the Law*, endeavouring to give our People the clearest Notions, both of the Things they are to believe, and of these they are to practise, and to show them the necessary Connection of the one with the other, and the powerful Influence that each Article of our Faith has to enforce the Practice of a holy Life. These are the Matters we are to insist upon in the Sermons we deliver to our People, these weighty Matters, whereby they may be made *wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

AND then as to the Manner of our Preaching, it must be with the greatest Plainness, so as we may descend to the Capacities of the meanest of our Hearers, avoiding all Affectation of strange Terms and *great swelling Words of Vanity* (*f*), for Men can never profit by what they do not understand. Our Sermons also must be delivered with such a serious Concern, that it may plainly appear, that they come from the Heart, and not from the Head only; for what comes not from the Heart of the Speaker, can never reach the Hearts of the Hearers. And to give a due Force and Efficacy to our Discourses, they must proceed from a Heart inflamed with Divine Love; for these glowing Words that come from a Heart which burns with Love, will be most apt to kindle a like Flame in the Hearts of others. We must also preach with a fervent Zeal, as becomes the Weight and Importance of the Matters we treat of, wherein the Glory of God, and the Salvation of precious Souls is so deeply concerned. And indeed the Charity we bear to the Souls of Men must, in a particular Manner, appear in our Sermons, that they may be convinced that what

we offer to them flows from an earnest Desire to promote their everlasting Welfare. We are to ply this Duty with an unwearied Diligence, being *instant in Season, and out of Season* (t). And there will be Need of great Prudence and spiritual Wisdom in the Management of it ; that we may *rightly divide the Word of Truth* (u), as wise and faithful Stewards, giving to every one his proper Portion.

BUT we must not think we have sufficiently discharged our Duty, when we preach to our People in publick ; no, we must also teach and exhort them privately *from House to House* (x), keeping up a regular Course of visiting the Families under our Charge, and that as often as we can. It must be our Care to enquire into the State and Condition of every Soul committed to our Trust, that we may apply our selves to each of them according to their Needs, doing what in us lies, to instruct the Ignorant, to awaken the Stupid, to reclaim the Vicious, to strengthen the Weak, to establish the Upright, and advance them to higher Degrees of Goodness, to relieve the Poor, to comfort the Afflicted, to visit the Sick, and to assist dying Persons in finishing their Preparations for the Life and Judgment to come. In a particular Manner we must be at great Pains in *Catechising* our People, especially the Youth, and these of weaker Capacity. This is a Matter of vast Importance ; and therefore we are to manage it with great Faithfulness and Diligence. It is to be carried on in a settled Course throughout the Year, and must not be put off till a few Weeks before we are to give the Communion, when it must needs be done in a Hurry, and therefore in too slight and superficial a Manner, to reach the great Ends of it. We are to set about this Part of our Work, with a tender Pity and Compassion to poor Souls, which ly in gross Ignorance, endeavouring, in the most easy and engaging Methods we can, to acquaint them with the great Principles and Duties of Religion, and

(t) 2 Tim. 4. 2. (u) 2 Tim. 2. 15. (x) Acts 20. 20.

and to stir them up to mind their everlasting Concerns. When a Parish is not very numerous, and of a large Extent, it will be no hard Matter to go through with a Course of *Visiting* and *Catechising* twice in the Year, and in very small Congregations, it is to be done oftner. This, with a more frequent Celebration of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, might, by the Blessing of God, prove a happy Means to banish that woful Ignorance that abounds almost every where, and to revive the Spirit of true Christianity, which is now under such a visible Decay.

BUT it is not enough that we endeavour to acquit our selves of these Duties which properly belong to our *Function* as *Ministers*, but even in our ordinary and common Conversation, we must drive on the same Design, and do the best we can to convey a serious Sense of God and Religion into the Minds of all we converse with, and to minister a seasonable Antidote against the poisonous Maxims of the World, that are so openly vented almost in all Companies. We must remember our Character when we are out of the Pulpit, as well as when we are in it. Our Conversation must be grave and serious, not light and frothy, or vain and trifling. *Our Speech ought always to be with Grace, seasoned with Salt* (y). *No corrupt Communication* should at any Time proceed out of our Mouth, *but that which is good to the Use of Edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers* (z). We are carefully to avoid all foolish *Talking and Jesting* which are not convenient (a), remembering, that of every idle Word we must give an Account in the Day of Judgment (b). O let us beware of hardening the Hearts of worldly Men, or opening the Mouths of the Profane, by taking any Freedom in Conversation, which becomes not our Character. In a special Manner, let us take Care that we utter not the least Word which may favour of the Love of this present World, or express

(y) Col. 4. 6. (z) Eph. 4. 29. (a) Eph. 5. 4. (b) Matth. 12. 36.



press a fond Esteem of worldly Things, of Riches, Honours or Pleasures, since our great Business is to call Men off from the Pursuit of these Vanities and Shadows here below, that they may seek their true Rest where alone it is to be found, in God and Things eternal. Let us endeavour to be still dropping somewhat in every Company, that may contribute to make them wiser and better. In other Men, this perhaps might be look'd on as a Piece of impertinent Affectation, but our Character will bear us out in it. It is what others expect from us, and therefore we are the more inexcusable, if we neglect it.

BUT it will be to little Purpose for us to recommend Religion to others by our good Words, either in publick or private, if we do not enforce all by the exemplary Holiness of our Lives. We cannot be the *Salt of the Earth*, if we are not careful to do, as well as to teach the Things that are good. We must make it appear that we believe our selves, when we press the Necessity of a holy Life, and that we are convinced by our own Reasons, which we can never do if our Practice is not of a Piece with our Doctrine. The Observation is not more common than true, that Example is of much greater Force than Counsel or Command. If then we wish that our Sermons and Exhortations may have their due Effect, Let us take Care to second and support them by the good Example of our Lives. Let us not only tell our People what Manner of Persons they ought to be, but let us shew it them in our own Life and Conduct. Let us set them the Pattern, that we may be able to address them in the Words of the blessed Apostle *Paul*, *Be ye Followers of us, even as we also are of Christ* (a). This would give a mighty Strength and Force to our Sermons. Every Word we speak, every good Advice we offer, would then be of great Weight, and apt to command a due Regard from others, while they see we have a just Regard to it our selves in our own Practice. It is a foolish Thing to imagine that we can do good to others by our Sermons or

Advices,

(a) 1 Cor. 11. 1.

Advices, though never so serious in Appearance, if they are openly contradicted by our Lives. They that are thoughtful and sagacious will observe our Conduct and Behaviour, and if that is much the same, or little better than their own, they cannot be much moved by any Thing we say to them. In vain do we preach against Pride or Covetousness if our common Conversation and Practice show us to be proud or covetous. In vain do we recommend any Duty to others, if we go on in the habitual Neglect of it our selves. If we desire that our Sermons may be effectual to answer their true Design, our Lives must be one constant Sermon. We must not only be careful to avoid these Irregularities and Disorders that are offensive and scandalous; but we must *shine as Lights in the World, being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the Glory and Praise of God.* Then may we hope for better Success in our Endeavours to season others with true Piety and solid Virtue.

BUT this is not all, for when we have done our utmost, both by our Doctrine and Example, to season our People, we must, as the *Salt of the Earth*, endeavour to preserve them from Corruption. It will concern us then to watch over our Flocks that they be not infected with the hurtful *Errors* that abound in this loose and giddy Age; but especially those fatal Errors that strike at the main and fundamental Articles of the *Christian Faith*, or that directly oppose all *revealed Religion*, which are now so industriously propagated among us, and alas with greater Success than we seem to be aware of. These dangerous Errors we are zealously to oppose, endeavouring to have our People well founded in the Knowledge and Belief of the opposite Truths, which we must be often inculcating and setting in the clearest Light we can.

WE are also with great Care to caution them against these pernicious Errors that have a Tendency to corrupt their *Lives and Manners*, to choak the good Seed, and to render it unfruitful, to lessen the Sense of their Obligations

gations to the Study of Holiness, to sooth them in their Sins, and give them false and presumptuous Hopes of Heaven, to flatter corrupt Nature and indulge the Flesh instead of crucifying it. These Errors are of dangerous Consequence, and the rather that they are apt to be greedily swallowed down by a great many who love the easiest and smoothest Accounts of their Duty, and would fain go to Heaven by the broad Way. Therefore we are to furnish them with the properest Antidotes against this Poison, which is so deadly, and yet so agreeable to their Taste. And for this Purpose we must be at great Pains to give them just Notions of the *Christian Life*, and to have these well fixed and deeply rooted in their Minds, teaching them to take an Estimate of true Christianity, not from the current Maxims of a degenerate Age, much less from the common Practice of those who profess themselves Christians; but from the plain Precepts of our blessed Saviour which are our Rule, and from his Life, which is our Pattern.

AND the better to preserve them from all Corruption of Manners, we are carefully to consider what Sins abound most among them, and what Snares they are most exposed to, that we may give them necessary Cautions and Antidotes against both. As to the Sins that are most frequent among our People, we are often to preach against them with a bold and fervent Zeal. We must endeavour to represent the Evil of them, and to lay them out in their true and proper Colours, that it may appear how hateful they are in their own Nature, and how pernicious in their Consequences. We must often warn our People to beware of them, and give them the most proper Advices and Directions, whereby they may be helped to guard against them. We are boldly and faithfully to reprove such as are guilty of whatever Rank or Quality, and that not only in general Discourses from the Pulpit, but in private and personal Applications to those concerned, that we may do what in us lies to awaken their Consciences, and bring them to



to Repentance, though this must be managed with such Prudence and Discretion, and such a Spirit of Charity, as it may plainly appear that we have no other Design, but to promote their everlasting Happiness. We must often insist on the dreadful Threatnings God has denounced against all impenitent Sinners, that the Consciences of the Secure may be awakened out of their spiritual Slumbers. We must also give them the most amiable Views of the rich Mercy and free Grace of God in Christ Jesus, that they may be encouraged to return to him without Delay.

AND when any are guilty of open and scandalous Offences, we are to reprove them openly before all, according to the Apostle's Rule, which is one of the main Foundations of *Ecclesiastical Discipline* (a), in the Exercise whereof we are to proceed, as with great Prudence and Tenderness, so with no less Faithfulness and Impartiality, remembring these most awful Words of the Apostle to *Timothy*, *I charge thee before God* (says he) *and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that thou observe these Things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality* (b). Agreeably to which the Apostle *James* so severely reproveth the partial Regards that are shown to the Man that wears a *Gold-ring*, and is clothed in *goodly Apparel* (c). We must act in this Matter, as we will be answerable to our Great Master, with whom there is *no Respect of Persons* (d).

AGAIN, As to the Snares that our People may be exposed unto, we are to give them faithful Warning against the same, that they may shun and avoid them, otherwise, if through our Neglect they step into the Snare and perish, *their Blood will be required at our Hands* (e). We are to consider the Temptations to which many of them may be obnoxious, and are by all proper Means to fortify and establish their Resolution against the same. More especially we are to guard them against the Snares

(a) 1 Tim. 5. 20. (b) Ver. 21. (c) Jam. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. (d) Eph. 6. 9. (e) Ezek. 3. 20.

of the World, its perverse Maxims, its corrupt Customs and bad Examples, which prove the Ruin of so many Souls. We must do our utmost to imprint on their Minds a deep and lively Sense of the Vanity of all earthly Things, and the Shortness and Uncertainty of this mortal Life, that we may the more effectually secure them against the pernicious Charms of the World. We are frequently to put them in Mind of Death, and exhort them to prepare for it, and for that strict and impartial Judgment, which must follow upon it. We are to set endless Eternity before their Eyes, and to be still urging them to live as Pilgrims and Strangers that are hastening to the invisible and eternal World. Thus we are to approve our selves the *Salt of the Earth*, that we may answer the Character our Saviour gives of true and faithful Pastors in my Text, which was the first Thing to be considered.

II. I am, in the next Place, to speak a little of the opposite Character of unworthy and unfaithful Ministers. They are as *Salt* that hath *lost his Savour*; and having insisted so largely on the former, I shall be the shorter on this, which is but the Reverse of it.

UNFAITHFUL Ministers (I say) are as *Salt* which has *lost its Savour*, tho' it may retain its Shape and Colour. They assume the Character of Pastors, and claim the Respect and the Profits belonging to it; they affect a certain Air of Gravity and Decency in some of the outward Forms of Religion, and they superficially discharge some external Parts of their Duty, but they have nothing of the true Spirit of their Character, they are utter Strangers to the Power of Godliness, and they wofully omit, or shamefully miscarry in the Management of the great and most necessary Parts of their Work. In a Word, they are like those *Idol-Shepherds* against whom the Prophet denounces a dreadful Wo (f). They have some outward Resemblance, some Shew and Appearance of true Shepherds, as an Image bears the Shapes and

Customs and Features of the Original, but they have nothing of their inward Life and Spirit, being mere Idols.

As Salt which has *lost its Savour*, they are not seasoned themselves, and they are incapable of seasoning others. Instead of that Divine Knowledge, wherewith their Minds ought to be seasoned, that right and just Sense of Things, that Wisdom from above, which is so necessary to those that are to be Guides to others, they have their Heads stuffed with many false and erroneous Opinions, or at best with some dry and barren Notions of Divine Things, and with these they reckon themselves sufficiently qualified to undertake the Conduct of Souls. Instead of that inward Life and Spirit of Jesus Christ, wherewith they ought to be animated in order to their communicating the same Life and Spirit to others, they are still under the Power and Influence of corrupt Nature, they are enslaved to their Lusts and Passions, they are acted and govern'd by the Spirit of the World, the selfish Spirit of Pride and Covetousness. They are Strangers to the true Love of God, and they have no Charity to the Souls of Men, no real Concern for them.

AND being unsavoury Salt themselves, they are utterly unfit to season others, for they can never give what they have not. Their Doctrine is unsavoury, for they speak of Things of which they have no Sense and Experience, as blind Men do of Colours. Yea they *pervert the Words of the Living God* (g), representing the Maxims of the Gospel in such a Light, and bringing them down to such a Sense, as may agree with the corrupt Customs and Fashions of a degenerate World. But if their Doctrine be bad, their Example is yet worse. The Character they bear, and the Office in which they are placed, will sometimes oblige them to say some good Things, but then what they say with their Mouths is belied by their Life; for *they say and do not* (h). They may, on some Occasions, *bind heavy Burdens and grievous to be born, and lay them on other Men's Shoulders,*

D 2



ders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their Fingers (i). Outward Decency and a Regard to their temporal Interest may prompt them to put on the Form of Godliness, but they are at the greatest Distance from the inward Power, and the real Practice of it. In a Word, there is nothing to distinguish them from the Men of the World, but that they are more artfully disguised, that is to say, the greater Hypocrites, and so indeed the worse Men.

NOW being so deeply sunk into the Corruption of the World themselves, it can never be expected that they should be happy Instruments to preserve others from it; they rather contribute to support and to spread it. The Disease having caught themselves, instead of securing others by proper Antidotes, they communicate the Infection, and diffuse it. Instead of rooting up the most dangerous Errors, and checking the Vices of their People, they rather fix and settle them, instilling wrong Notions of Religion into their Minds, and encouraging them in a worldly and sensual Life, not daring to reprove Sin faithfully, especially in those that are *rich and great*, or to give them necessary Warning, and being manifestly *Partial* in the *Discipline* of the Church, while they exercise it only or chiefly on the poorer and meaner Sort of Men.

THUS I have hinted at the Character of unworthy and unfaithful Ministers, who are as *Salt* which has *lost its Savour*. It were much to be wished that all this were only a mere Idea, or an abstracted Notion; but, alas, it must be own'd, that it has been too sadly verified in Fact. In the declining Times of the *Jewish* Church, we find dreadful Things laid to the Charge of their Priests. The Prophet *Isaiah* inveighs against them as *dumb Dogs* that could not bark, *sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber* (k). Yet at the same Time he observes, that they were *greedy Dogs, which could never have enough*: --- *They all looked to their own Way, every one for*

(i) Matth. 23. 4. (k) Isa. 56. 10, 11.

for his Gain from his Quarter They were unfaithful Shepherds that fleeced the Flock, but did not feed it; yea they had destroyed and scattered the Sheep of God's Pasture, they had scattered the Flock, and driven them away, and had not visited them; therefore there is a Wo denounced against them by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxiii. 1. Both Prophet and Priest were profane, yea the Lord complains that he had found their Wickedness, even in his own House, Ver. 11. Upon which there follows a dreadful Threatning, Ver. 12. That their Way should be unto them as slippery Ways in the Darkness, that they should be driven on and fall therein, for I will bring Evil upon them, even the Tear of their Visitation, saith the Lord. In the Prophecy of *Ezekiel*, we have grievous Complaints of this Kind. Her Priests have violated my Law (says God) and have profaned mine holy Things, they have put no Difference between the Holy and Profane, neither have they shewed Difference between the Unclean and the Clean, and have hid their Eyes from my Sabbaths (1), and then he adds, to shew the dreadful Aggravation of their Guilt, and the mournful Consequence of it, I am profaned among them. But the Corruption of the Priests and Shepherds of *Israel* is more fully and particularly set forth in the 34th Chap. of that same Prophecy, from Ver. 2. where you have a heavy Charge laid against them, and introduced with a dismal Wo, Wo be to the Shepherds of *Israel*, that do feed themselves; should not the Shepherds feed the Flock? Ye eat the Fat, and ye clothe you with the Wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the Flock. The Diseased have ye not strengthned, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with Force and with Cruelty have ye ruled them. This makes Way for a terrible Threatning, Ver. 10. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against the Shepherds, and I will require my Flock at their Hand, and cause them

them to cease from feeding the Flock, neither shall the Shepherds feed themselves any more: For I will deliver my Flock from their Mouth, that they may not be Meat for them. And Malachy, the last of the Prophets, lays open the Corruption of the Priests in his Time. For the Lord by him draws up a sad Inditement against them. *The Priests Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the Way, ye have caused many to stumble at the Law, ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts (l).*

OUR Blessed Saviour has given us at great Length the Character of the corrupt Teachers and Pastors of the Jewish Church in their last and fatal Period, a little before their final Overthrow by the Romans. They sat in Moses's Seat and taught the People; but tho' in some Things they said well, yet their Practice was abominable (m). Their Religion lay only in outward Shew and empty Form. They were as whited Sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead Men's Bones, and of all Uncleaness; for while they outwardly appeared righteous unto Men, within they were full of Hypocrisy and Iniquity (n). They had a mighty Zeal, and were very strict in some lesser Things, in tithing even the smallest Herbs, but they neglected the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, and the Love of God (o). They were scrupulously nice in observing their Traditions (p), but by these they made the Commandments of God of none Effect (q). They had a great Appearance of Devotion in their frequent Fastings and long Prayers, and pompous Charities, but in all these they sought the Praise of Men; they fondly courted the Applauses of the People, desiring to be called of Men, Rabbi, Rabbi (r), while, in the

(l) Mal. 2. 7, 8. (m) Matth. 23. 2, 3, 4. (n) Ver. 27, 28.  
 (o) Ver. 23. compared with Luke 11. 42. (p) Matth. 15. 3, 6.  
 (q) Matth. 6. 2, 5, 16. (r) Matth. 23. 5, 7.



the mean Time, under this fair Mask, they could devour Widows Houses (f). They were industrious to the last Degree in making Profelytes to their Way, but instead of making them beter Men, they made them a great Deal worse than they had been formerly. In a Word, they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men, for they neither went in themselves, neither suffered they them that were entring to go in (t).

THUS it was in the Jewish Church, and in the Christian; alas, it is too evident that there has been a lamentable Defection of the same Kind, if not worse. In the primitive and purer Ages, the Pastors of the Church were eminent Examples of Christian Piety. Their Breasts were then warm with the Love of God, and they had a fervent Charity to the Souls of Men. The Spirit of their Great Master breathed in them, and they were careful to trace his Steps. They faithfully preached his Gospel, and made it their Business to practise what they preached, in a constant Purity, and Humility, and Self-denial, in a steady Contempt of the Vanities and Pleasures of this World, and a Readiness to suffer for their Master's Sake, and to seal the Truth of his Doctrine with their Blood. They were indeed the *Salt of the Earth*. But in succeeding Times, when a Crowd of worldly Men broke in upon the Church, and when Wealth and Honour was heaped upon Church-men, then the *Salt* soon lost its *Savour*, the Spirit of pure and primitive Christianity was quickly banished, and the Spirit of the World came in its Stead.

THEN the Pastors of the Church were seized with a Spirit of Covetousness, and began to gape after the richest and fattest Benefices. Their Hearts were swelled with Pride and Ambition, they loved to have the Preeminence, and to lord it over their Brethren. Then they began to usurp a Tyrannical Power, and that of the worst Kind, as Lords over the Consciences of Men, and as having Dominion over their Faith. Religion was then

turn'd

(f) Matth. 23. 14, 15. (t) Ver. 13.

turn'd into a Strife of Words, a Set of Opinions, and some outward Forms, about which they fiercely contend-  
ed with such mutual Hatred and Spite, as utterly ex-  
tinguished the Spirit of Charity, and so while they  
strove about the Shadow, they lost the Substance. Then  
instead of the primitive Spirit of Meekness and mutual  
Forbearance, they were leavened and soured with a  
peevish and a persecuting Spirit, by which, as they were  
countenanced and encouraged by the civil Powers, they  
did cruelly bite and devour one another. Upon this,  
Factions being formed, the primitive Discipline was re-  
laxed, and all the Mischiefs of a Party-Spirit did very  
soon appear in the Church, to the great Scandal and Re-  
proach of Christianity. Bad Men were hugged and en-  
tertain'd, if they were but firm and true to their Party;  
their Crimes were overlook'd, and the fairest Colours were  
put upon their foulest Actions. Holy Things were given  
to Dogs, and Pearls were cast before Swine, while, in  
the mean Time, the smallest Faults of those that were  
of a different Side were narrowly enquir'd into, and set  
in the most unfavourable Light, on Purpose to expose  
them. So that the Character of a good or bad Man  
came to be given, not according to the good or bad  
Conduct of one's Life, but as he appear'd to be for, or  
against a Party.

WHEN Things were so far out of Course, no Won-  
der, if the Pastors became slothful and negligent in the  
great Duties of their sacred Office. Instead of feeding  
the Flock, they fed and pamper'd themselves, indulging  
their Ease, and living in Luxury. And the better to  
support this, they soon learn'd by base Submissions and  
falsome Flatteries, to insinuate themselves in the Favour  
of *rich* and *great Men*, soothing them in their Sins, and  
fawning upon them, while they treated the Poor with  
the greatest Rigour and Contempt. Thus the Corrupti-  
on went on, till at last in the Eastern Church it made  
Way for *Mahometanism*, and in the Western it introduced  
and established the *Antechristian Tyranny*, which at  
length

length rose to such a Height, that their *Clergy* fell under the utmost Contempt. This gave a great Occasion to the *Reformation*, and contributed much to the speedy Progress of it. But, alas, who does not see, that even in the reformed Churches there is a woful Defection from the Spirit and Practice of true Christianity, and that a *Reformation* of our *Lives* and *Manners* is still wanting, whilst a fatal Corruption spreads among all Ranks of Men, and a Spirit of *Infidelity* is fast breaking in upon us, and threatening the most dismal Consequences. How far we that are of the holy Ministry may be involved in the prevailing Corruption, how far any of us may be as the Salt which has lost its Savour, it nearly concerns us to enquire with our utmost Care. Every one of us in this Case is to deal impartially with himself, and to examine his Conscience as in the Sight of God, before whose awful Tribunal we must all very soon appear. This is a Matter of the last Importance; for unworthy and unfaithful Ministers, as they are the Reproach of their Character and the worst of Men, so they must expect the heaviest Condemnation.

THIS leads me to the *third* and *last* Thing in the Text, which is the dreadful Doom here pronounced upon all such unfaithful Pastors. *If the Salt have lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under Foot of Men.* Now this will imply the following Particulars. 1. That such Ministers are of all Men the most unprofitable, the most incurable and hurtful. 2. That they are doomed to the utmost Contempt, even in this World. 3. That they ought to be cast out of their Office by the Censures of the Church. And, 4. That they shall be cast and condemn'd in the great Day of Judgment.

I. UNFAITHFUL Pastors are of all Men the most unprofitable, the most incurable and hurtful. They are the most unprofitable. For the *Salt* which hath lost its Savour, is thenceforth good for nothing. It is neither for the Land, nor yet for the Dung-hill(a). When Mini-

E

fter



sters have not the Spirit of their Character, when their Temper and Course of Life is a Contradiction and Reproach to it, they can never answer the noble Ends and Purposes of it. They are unprofitable Burdens of the Earth. There are none so useless, so worthless as they, none that live to so little Purpose. They are good for nothing. This is bad enough, but what follows is worse. They are of all Men the most incurable. For *if the Salt have lost his Savour, wherewith shall it be salted?* Other Things that are unsavoury may be seasoned with Salt, but if the Salt itself should become insipid, there is no Remedy for it. Thus, corrupt Ministers are of all Men the most irrecoverable. And no Wonder, since they have sinned against the strongest Obligations, and broke through the most solemn Vows, and shut their Eyes against the clearest Light, and hardened their Hearts against the most powerful Means of Conviction. In a Word, since they have gone on in a wilful Course of profaning the most sacred Things, they must needs have seared their Consciences to such a Degree, and contracted such a Numness and Deadness, that it must be the hardest Thing in the World to awaken them. And sad Experience has abundantly verified this. But there is something worse still behind. They are of all Men the most hurtful. Unsavoury Salt is not only good for nothing, but it must be cast out, and troden under Foot as a Thing that is hurtful. *It is not for the Dung-bill, nor for the Land,* being rather apt to make it barren than fruitful. Thus, unworthy and unfaithful Ministers are extremely hurtful. There are none that do such Mischief as they. By them the Name of God is dishonoured, holy Things are profaned, Religion is exposed to Scorn and Derision, the Mouths of impious Men are opened, the Hearts of Sinners are hardened, and precious Souls are ruined for ever.

II. UNFAITHFUL Ministers are here doom'd to the utmost Contempt, even in this World. For as Salt which has lost its Savour, they are good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be troden under Foot of Men. Thus, God

God punished the corrupt Priests in *Malachy's Days*, *Ye have caused many to stumble at the Law* (says he) *ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi ; therefore have I also made you contemptible, and base before all the People* (b). *Them that honour me* (says God else where) *I will honour ; but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed* (c). And indeed it is a righteous Thing with God, that they who have poured such Contempt on sacred Things, should themselves be made the Objects of Contempt and Scorn. They well deserve such Treatment, for they are the basest and worst of Men. The Character of a Minister indeed is sacred and honourable in itself, but these unworthy Men are a Reproach and Disgrace to it. It is to their Conduct that all that Contempt is owing, which hath been cast upon the sacred Office, nor can we expect to wipe it off, till we recover a Temper and Behaviour suitable to our Character. *Let no Man despise thy Youth*, (says the Apostle to *Timothy*) but then he adds the following Advice, as the only effectual Means to reach this End, *Be thou an Example of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity* (d).

III. UNFAITHFUL Ministers ought to be cast out of their Office by the Censures of the Church. As unsavoury Salt, which is good for nothing, they must be cast out, upon due Trial and Conviction. They are hurtful Cumberers of the Ground, therefore they must be plucked up, and thrown over the Hedge. It is necessary that this be done, to prevent the Dishonour they do to God, the Reproach they cast upon Religion, the Mischief they do to the Souls of Men, and the horrid Scandal that is given by the Profanation of sacred Things.

IV. UNWORTHY Ministers shall be cast and condemn'd in the great Day of Judgment, as unsavoury Salt is cast out and troden under Foot. Their Guilt has been of a much deeper Dye than that of other Men, because of the peculiar Aggravations that accompanied it ; and therefore they shall receive a heavier Doom. As faithful Pastors may expect a peculiar Degree of Glory above

E 2

others,

(b) Mal. 2. 8, 9. (c) 1 Sam. 2. 30. (d) 1 Tim. 4. 12.

others, so the Unfaithful must look for a higher Degree of Punishment. They, in a special Manner, *shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power* (e). *There shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, while they themselves are thrust out* (f). It will be to no Purpose then to plead, Lord, Lord, *have we not taught and preached in thy Name?* No, he will profess unto them, *I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity* (g).

UPON the whole then, my Reverend and Dear Brethren, as we tender the Glory of God, the Good of Souls, the Credit of Religion, the true Interest of the Church, and our own Peace and Comfort in this Life, together with our everlasting Happiness in the next; as we wish to avoid the Guilt of Blood, the Blood of Souls, and the dreadful Doom in my Text, let us approve ourselves faithful in our sacred Office; let us study to answer the Character we bear, that we may be indeed *the Salt of the Earth*; and let us by all Means take Care that we do not *lose our Savour*.

FOR this Purpose, let us seriously consider the vast Importance of our Work, and the weighty Consequences that must follow, either upon a right or wrong Performance of it. Let us remember that we are ever under the Eye of our Great Lord and Master, who, in a peculiar Manner, observes our Conduct. Let us often think on that glorious Crown, that is prepared for wise and faithful Pastors, who shall *shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, yea as the Stars for ever and ever* (h). And, on the other Hand, let us never forget the dreadful Punishments, the dismal Agonies and Horrors that must be the Portion of unfaithful Ministers for ever. Let us with the deepest Seriousness, and the closest Application of Mind, consider the Rules of our Conduct, as they are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, particularly in

(e) 2 Thess. 1. 9. (f) Luke 13. 28. (g) Matth. 7. 22, 23.  
(h) Dan. 12. 3.



in the *Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, and let us be often examining our selves thereupon. Let us have our Eyes fixed on the noble Examples of the Holy *Prophets* and *Apostles*, and the faithful and fervent Pastors of the *Primitive Church*, that by their pious Zeal and Diligence, their steady Faith and Patience, we may shame our selves out of our Sloth and Indolence, our Softness and Delicacy. But above all, Let us ever look to Jesus our Blessed Master, the Chief Shepherd, *who went about doing Good* (i), with such unwearied Diligence, who thought no Labours too hard, no Sufferings too sharp, that were necessary for the Good of his Sheep, yea, who chearfully laid down his Life, and shed his precious Blood for them.

LET us carefully avoid every Thing that may prove a Hindrance or a Snare to us. Let us shun all unnecessary and familiar Converse with worldly and wicked Men, lest we catch their Disease, and insensibly take a Tincture of their Dispositions and Manners. Let us beware of plunging our selves into secular Business and Affairs, which divert us from our proper Work, and sink our Thoughts and Affections to the Earth: Yea, let us guard against all improper and impertinent Studies, which are an unprofitable Waste of Time, and which instead of furnishing our Minds with good and useful Thoughts, do sow such Tares as are apt to choak the good Seed. Let us study the great Lesson of Humility and Self-denial, remembring, that God resists the Proud, but gives his Grace to the Humble. Let us faithfully and constantly apply to the serious Exercise of Mortification; and for this End, let us often think on these Words of the great Apostle *Paul*, which may well give us a loud Alarm, *I keep under my Body* (says he) *and bring it into Subjection, lest that by any Means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a Cast-away* (k).

LET us learn to *walk with God*, and to entertain our selves with him; yea, let us make him our *Dwelling-place*, our *Habitation*, our *Rest*, that when we go out to our Work, we may discharge it to better Purpose; and when

(i) Acts 10. 38. (k) 1 Cor. 9. 27,

when our Work abroad is done, let us make Haste to return to *him* again, *flying as Doves to their Windows* (1). Let us give our selves to Prayer, and to the Contemplation of Divine Things. This ought to be our daily Work, but it will be proper that we set apart some stated Times for the more solemn Performance of this Duty, when having retired from all Business and Company, and laid aside all other Thoughts and Cares, and Studies, we are to enter into our selves, and to make a narrow Enquiry into the State of our own Souls, and our Conduct, both as Christians and Ministers; we are to consider what Manner of Persons we ought to be, and by what Methods we may most effectually accomplish the great Designs of our sacred Office; we are to make humble and sorrowful Acknowledgments of our Sins and Defects, imploring the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ; we are also to consecrate our selves to *him* afresh, and to renew our Vows. At such Times we are likewise to consider the State of the Souls committed to our Charge, that we may by fervent Prayer address our selves to God for suitable Aids and Influences of his Grace, both to our selves and them, begging to be better fitted for our Work, to be more powerfully assisted in it, and to be favoured with more desirable Success. And these stated Times of Retirement and Devotion, must not be too long intermitted. Were one Day in each Month thus bestowed, it might be of great Advantage both to us and our People. In a Word, if we would not lose our Saviour, let us intrust our selves to *him who is able to make all Grace abound towards us* (m), *to keep us from Falling, and to present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy* (n). Let us depend on him, and cleave to him with Purpose of Heart, and then *he will never leave us, nor forsake us* (o). *He will be with us, he will strengthen us, he will help us, yea he will uphold us with the Right-hand of his Righteousness* (p).

LET

(1) Isa. 60. 8. (m) 2 Cor. 9. 8. (n) Jude Ve. 24. (o) Heb. 13. 5. (p) Isa. 41. 10.

LET me now address my self in a few Words to the People, and I have done.

IN the *first* Place, Dear Christians, we earnestly beg your Pity and your Prayers. None have more Need of both than we. The Difficulty of our Work, the manifold Oppositions and Discouragements we meet with in it, and the strict Account we must give of it, do loudly call for your Sympathy, and on the same Accounts we want, we crave the Help of your Prayers. If the blessed Apostle *Paul*, so earnestly and frequently begs the Prayers of those to whom he writes, how much more ought we to ask the Prayers of all serious Christians in our Behalf. *Brethren pray for us (q). We beseech you for the Lord Jesus Christ's Sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with us in your Prayers to God for us (r).* And the Fruit of your Prayers will return into your own Bosoms; for the more ye pray for your Ministers, the more ye may expect to profit by their Labours.

2. BEWARE, I beseech you, of doing any Thing on your Part that may weaken the Hands, or grieve the Spirits of your faithful Pastors. Alas they have Load and Burden enough already, tho' ye add nothing to it. And ye may be well assured, that the Grief and Sorrow ye occasion to them, will not turn to your Comfort in the Issue. Endeavour therefore so to acquit your selves of your Duty towards them, that they may have Matter of Joy and Rejoicing in you. For this Purpose I recommend to your serious Thoughts that pressing Exhortation of the Apostle *Paul*, which you have, *1 Thess. v. 12. We beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Work's Sake, and be at Peace among your selves.* To this I add another Exhortation of the same Apostle, *Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as they*



*they that must give Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief, for that is unprofitable for you.*

3. WE beg that ye may do what in you lies to forward the Success of our Labours. *Break up your Fallow-ground (f),* that when we preach to you, we may not sow the good Seed among Thorns. Bring humble, broken, prepared Hearts to receive the Word of God, and then it will yield its Fruit in your Lives. Look narrowly to your selves, *consider your Ways,* and *ponder the Path of your Feet.* Improve your Day of Grace while it lasts; work while it is Day, for the Night cometh wherein no Man can work.

TAKE a due Care of your Families, and mind the Duties of *Family-worship,* and *Family-instruction.* Let every one of your Houses be a *Bethel,* a House of God, not a *Bethaven,* a House of Vanity or Iniquity. Train up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. Teach and admonish, and exhort your Servants and Prentices; and give a good Example to all ye converse with. Remember what ye heard in the Beginning of this Discourse, that every Christian is in his Station and Capacity to be as the *Salt* of the Earth, to season others by wholesome Counsel and good Example. *Exhort one another daily while it is called to Day, lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin (t).* Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven (u).

THUS let all of us endeavour to approve our selves faithful in our several Capacities, that when we appear before our Great Judge, we may receive that welcome Approbation, *Well done good and faithful Servants, enter ye into the Joy of your Lord (x).* To his Name be the Glory and the Praise for ever. Amen.

(f) Jer. 4. 3. (t) Heb. 3. 13. (u) Matth. 5. 16. (x) Matth. 25. 21.

F I N I S.